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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000258

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SUBJECT: ALLAWI ALLY SAYS AYAD OPEN TO OVERSEEING SECURITY MINISTRIES

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT S. FORD FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Summary. Safia Suhail told Poloffs January 30 that former PM Allawi would be open to a government appointment overseeing the security ministries. She added that SCIRI's Abd' al-Aziz al-Hakim is trying to establish a political marja'iya in order to remain in power over ever-increasing popular Moqtada al-Sadr. Suhail claimed that Tawafiq and Allawi will stay aligned during government formation talks. Suhail added that if the Shia Alliance decides to pick Ibrahim Jafari for Prime Minister, it would not be surprising if Fadhila Party's Nadim al-Jabiri and SCIRI Adel Abd al-Madhi leave the Alliance and join with the Kurds. In that case, Suhail said that the Allawi camp would be open to working with both al-Jabiri and Abd' al-Madhi to form a coalition government. End Summary.

First Iraqi Woman Negotiator

¶2. (C) On January 29, Safar Suhail expressed excitement to PolOffs that she was the only woman named to the Iraqi National List negotiating team for the new government formation talks. She said that other members of the team included Allawi, himself, as well as Rosum al-Awadi, Adnan Pachachi, and Ghazi al-Yawr. Mohamed Allawi and Azzet Shahbander will be Allawi's second tier interlocutors with Fadhila's Nadim al-Jabiri and SCIRI's Abd' al-Aziz al-Hakim.

¶3. (C) Suhail reported that Mohamed Allawi and Shahbander have spoken with al-Jabiri on policy but not about his bid for Prime Minister. Suhail said that everyone was awaiting Masoud Barzani's arrival in order to start serious talks about government formation. (NOTE: Barzani arrived in Baghdad January 28. END NOTE) Although Suhail said she urged Ayad Allawi to stay in Baghdad to be available for talks, Allawi left for London and should be back in a couple of days.

Allawi Not Insisting on Premiership

¶4. (C) Suhail was aware of discussions to create a third Deputy Prime Minister position and National Security Council. She added that Allawi was resigned to the fact that he was unlikely to be Prime Minister and would be open to a position such as Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the security ministries. Suhail said the UIA was still unsure as to who would be its candidate for the PM spot. She said that the declaration that the candidate would be named after the election result certification was just an excuse to cover up internal UIA uncertainty. Both Jafari and Abd' al-Mahdi are influenced by Iran said Suhail, though Mahdi enjoys President Talabani's support. Suhail claimed that Da'wa is busy

creating its own militia within the security forces.

Al-Hakim's Political Marja'iya

¶ 15. (C) Suhail claimed that Abd' al-Aziz al-Hakim's quest for a political marja'iya is well known to the Allawi bloc. She added that Hakim's hatred of Moqtada al-Sadr remained strong and that the SCIRI leaders wanted to win over Moqtada at all costs. Suhail claimed that Hakim was aware he was losing influence to the more popular Moqtada; Hakim's leadership of political marja'iya would afford him a superior position over Sadr.

Delisting Not Unexpected

¶ 16. (C) Suhail expressed her dismay that Allawi ally Saad al-Janabi was delisted from the candidate list due to de-Ba'thification. However, Suhail said she understood why both Adnan al-Janabi and Rosum al-Awadi were delisted, admitting that both men had been part of Saddam's power circle and financially benefited from their relationship with the deposed dictator.

¶ 17. (C) Suhail did not offer PolOffs names of possible cabinet ministers. She considered it premature since no decision has been made on who will be the next Prime Minister. As for herself, Suhail said she wanted a real decision-making position in the next government. She said she understood the dynamics of a coalition government could result in Allawi's group perhaps garnering only one high-level position.

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"Logically it will be filled by Ayad," she said. She said serving in the Council of Representatives COR would be extremely worthwhile. She added that it would be a pleasure to work with her colleague Maysoon al-Damaliji, to whom Allawi promised his seat if he got appointed to higher office.

¶ 18. (C) COMMENT: Safia Suhail is number three on the Allawi list. She is one of the most outspoken female politicians in Iraq. She appears frequently in the media. She is considered part of Allawi's inner circle. END COMMENT.
KHALILZAD